

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBO-01 A-01 OPR-02 MMS-04 PER-05 ST-01

SCA-01 CPR-02 M-02 INR-11 CIAE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 RSC-01

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R 311224Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1128

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, ASFP, SY

SUBJECT: ALEPPO CG NOW OFFICIALLY CLOSED

REF: A. DAMASCUS 1242; B. STATE 138170

1. POST WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON NEXT STEP CONCERNING ALEPPO SITUATION. AS DEPARTMENT IS WELL AWARE, HEAVY DAMAGE TO THE ALEPPO PROPERTY OCCURED IN JUNE 1967. AS INDICATED IN REF B THERE DO NOT SEEM TO BE ANY PLANS BY DEPARTMENT TO REOPEN ALEPPO IN NEAR FUTURE. POST CONCURS WITH THIS DECISION.

2. AT PRESENT, TWO FSL POSITIONS ARE OCCUPIED AT THE ALEPPO CG. THESE POSTIONS ARE NEEDED IN DAMASCUS. POST REALIZES THAT THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS TO ANY DECISION TO MOVE POSITIONS TO DAMASCUS; (A) THE COMPASSIONATE VIEW TOWARDS THE TWO LOCALS WHO HAVE REMAINED WITH ALEPPO CG SINCE JUNE 1967; (B) THE NEED FOR POSITIONS HERE IN DAMASCUS. BOTH LOCALS HAVE DONE AN ADMIRABLE JOB DURING THE LONG USG ABSENCE AND WERE SUBJECT TO MUCH LOCAL PRESSURE BY SARG OFFICIALS IN FORM OF HARRASSMENT AND INTENSIVE INTEROGATION FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS OF THE BREAK. AS A MATTER OF FACT ONE FSL WAS BARRED BY SYRIANS SECURITY FROM OBTAINING WORK FOR TWO YEARS. HE WAS HIRED BACK AT THE ALEPPO CG ON 1 JUL

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3. THE OTHER QUESTIONS IS WHAT TO DO WITH OFFICE SUPPLIES, FURNITURE AND A FEW HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS NOT DAMAGED BY '67 FIRE. POST IS CONSIDERING UTILIZING THIS EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES AT NEWLY-REOPENED EMBASSY IN DAMASCUS.

4. FYI: A FEW DAYS AGO, SYRIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S., SABAH KABBANI, INFORMALLY RAISED WITH CHARGE THE POSSIBILITY OF REOPENING SYRIAN CG IN NEW YORK CITY. CHARGE REPLIED THAT USG PREPARED CONSIDER SUCH A REQUEST ON BASIC OF RECIPORCITY. KABBANI'S REACTION WAS FAVORABLE BUT HE HASTENED TO ADD THAT HE WAS ONLY SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF. END FYI.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THE KABBANI PROBE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN TAKEN ON HIS PERSONAL INITIATIVE, THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO KEEP IT IN MIND IN MAKING A DECISION ON THE FUTURE OF ALEPPO.
SCOTES

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